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ABSTRACT

This study examines the progress that curriculum centers have made since two major studies were conducted in the 1980s. The present study was limited to 14 Illinois academic institutions whose curriculum centers were surveyed to determine whether their institutional role was to serve as media holding centers or whether they constituted a major form of support for the education program. Their role was defined through the comprehensiveness of their collection composition, reference services, bibliographic instruction, and staffing. The survey results indicate the following: curriculum materials circulation has increased since the 1980s; online circulation systems have largely replaced the manual systems; collection development policies exist in all of the curriculum centers; 64% of the libraries now employ their technical services division to catalog materials by the Dewey or Library of Congress classification systems; most curriculum materials are integrated into the library's online catalog and circulation system; and many institutions indicate a willingness to dedicate resources and staff to aid in the processing and availability of materials. Based on an examination of the types of services offered by the curriculum centers, it is concluded that the institutions are providing a wide range of services to education faculty and staff. (5 references) (MAB)

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# CURRICULUM CENTERS AS SUPPORT TO EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

In 1990, the Professional Development Research Committee at Northeastern Illinois University received a grant to study teacher education programs at schools similar to ours. Over 30 schools were chosen to survey by telephone. One of the authors participated in designing the survey. The committee sought to find new ideas and exemplary programs in teacher education. As the survey developed, this author began to wonder how well the academic library curriculum centers at these institutions worked with the education faculty and students. She began designing questions regarding the curriculum centers' operations as they related to the teacher education programs. The committee applauded this outreach and suggested this be the basis of a supplemental survey. At this point the author shared her ideas with the other author of this paper and they began to research the subject.

In the Summer 1985 issue of Library Trends, Phyllis Geraldine Ahlsted discussed the results of her 1980 survey of academic library media facilities. Her article mentioned the lack of research available to her on the subject. She stated, "It soon became evident, however, that there had

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been virtually no research conducted on the place of media centers in academic libraries."(1) This was the basis of her decision to conduct a survey. She commented that the topics of library automation, microcomputers, and the video market were not included in her research. Her survey covered collection composition and use preferences, arrangement and access to the collection, circulation, collection development, staffing and bibliographic control. At that time Ahlsted stated that due to shrinking financial support there have been relatively minor shifts in the emphasis or character of media facilities during the past few years.(2)

About the same time that Ahlsted was conducting her survey, Alice S. Clark was researching her book Managing Curriculum Materials in the Academic Library. Clark provided a history of the curriculum materials center and discussed its role in the academic and local community. She then went on to discuss administration, the laboratory role of the Center, setting up the facility, collection development, acquisition and organization of materials and managing the services of the center. In researching her book, Clark visited and surveyed curriculum materials librarians whose experiences and knowledge she used to help define the practices and policies used in curriculum collections at the time. She also stated that there was little research available in the literature on this topic. Clark uses the information she gathered to update and

evaluate the recommendations made in theses and dissertations in the field of professional education. She mentioned a variety of ways of handling each situation, discussed the strengths and weakness of each practice, and then recommended the best course to follow and provided written guidelines to aid the practicing librarian.(3)

These two studies conducted in the early 1980's constituted the basis for determining the state of curriculum and media centers at that time. No other broad studies have been published on this topic to date.

After surveying the literature, we decided to see the progress curriculum centers have made since the early 1980's. We decided to limit our preliminary research to Illinois institutions which were identified as having curriculum centers by the ALA/ACRL Education and Behavioral Sciences Section's Directory of Curriculum Materials Centers.(4) We sent out 14 surveys and through phone and mail responses, we were able to get information from all 14 institutions.

We were particularly interested in the types of materials being collected and how comprehensively each institution was collecting them. Were most institutions merely holding centers for media, or were they trying to completely support education programs at the institutions? The numbers and types of materials on which each focused seemed to demonstrate their intended goals.

In addition to collecting materials, an institution's willingness to dedicate resources and staff for processing materials, reference services, and bibliographic instruction denoted tangible evidence of dedication to supporting teacher education programs. This explained our need to look at cataloging and classification, circulation of materials, hours of operation, and staffing.

We also wanted to know how broadly each institution defined their educational communities. How responsible did each one feel for supporting the university community, the students and faculty, and the outside community?

For this talk, we are going to combine our survey results and conclusions and compare our findings with the data found in the two studies mentioned above.

Out of 14 libraries, only one stated that children's fiction and non-fiction were not housed in the Center and half of these had holdings between 12,000 and 38,000 volumes. Curriculum center staff found that children's literature courses and various methods classes utilized this type of collection.

In the area of textbooks and accompanying materials many libraries indicated that they made up the bulk of their collection and all of the institutions surveyed collected textbooks. This was understandable since education faculty base many assignments and projects on these materials. They believed that future teachers will need to be familiar with

these materials for selecting them and using them in the schools.

Some large microfiche collections of curriculum guides are available. Three libraries mentioned owning Xerox University Microfilms and 6 mentioned owning the Kraus Collection. Only two centers had no paper nor microfiche curriculum guides. Curriculum guides are used in much the same way as textbooks especially in methods classes. Many librarians felt that, in addition to ERIC, subscribing to microfiche collections was the best way to collect and maintain an up-to-date curriculum guide collection.

Test collections were in demand by education students and faculty for evaluation and sampling. The authors' curriculum library collected examination sets consisting usually of a test, manual and scoring key. Only four libraries indicated no paper nor microfiche tests.

Under the category of AV materials, we included: audio cassettes, sound recordings, filmstrips, video tapes, 16 mm films, and computer software. Video tapes and computer software were items not included in the earlier research.

Two institutions indicated no AV holdings. Of the libraries which indicated holdings of AV materials, four owned videorecordings, ten collected sound recordings, and one held a collection of motion pictures. Twelve centers indicated that they owned filmstrips and kits, and they had large numbers of this type of material. Five maintained a collection of computer software; and one said that they

planned to collect in this area this year. Eight centers noted holdings of slide programs.

We asked in the survey about the number of books in educational philosophy and history in a collection. All of the libraries indicated large holdings in this area but some responses said that the materials were not actually housed in their curriculum centers. Some were in adjacent stacks and others were elsewhere in the library.

For the purpose of this paper, we defined teacher resource books as books which outlined lesson plans, curriculum units, and/or learning activities. Eleven libraries indicated holdings of this type of book.

Finally, we asked librarians to list any other types of materials collected. The following materials were named: periodicals, publishers' catalogs, vertical file materials, reference books, models, games, realia, art prints, pictures, study prints, transparencies, flash cards, and teaching aids. We noted from the large collections of the above types of materials being collected at the majority of the institutions surveyed that curriculum centers are indeed supporting education programs at the institutions.

In her book, Alice Clark wrote, "If the curriculum materials center was not to be a 'stepchild' of the library, all cataloged materials should also be in the main card catalog and in any other bibliographic records which describe the library's holdings. They should thus be available to anyone on campus, subject to the necessary

limitations on circulation which are found in many kinds of library collections."(5) We were interested in seeing how far library curriculum materials centers have come in meeting these goals since she and Ahlsted did their research.

Ahlsted said that 57% of the libraries in her survey circulated curriculum materials; 91% of these having a manual system. In our survey we found that all of our libraries circulated curriculum materials and 85% of the institutions had an on-line circulation system. However, only 35% of the curriculum centers had the same circulation policy for curriculum materials as the general library had. The rest of the centers named reduced circulation periods and no renewals as variations. As far as providing service to the collection, 64% of the centers maintained the same hours of service for the center as for the general collection.

Ahlsted also indicated that 42% of the libraries she surveyed had collection development policies. All of the institutions we surveyed indicated such policies.

In Ahlsted's survey, 61% of the libraries had their materials cataloged by technical services staff with 36% having their materials cataloged by media center staff. 55% of her libraries used Dewey or LC for classification and 70% were using OCLC for cataloging. In our survey 64% of the libraries had most of their materials cataloged by the technical services division of the library. Of the surveyed

institutions, 85% provided full cataloging and 92% used Dewey or LC classification for the bulk of their collection. Of the responding centers, 69% had some curriculum materials in the general library's card catalog if there was one; 85% had some materials in the general library's on-line catalog if there was one; and 83% had curriculum materials listed in the library's on-line circulation system if there was one. Institutions were definitely showing a willingness to dedicate resources and staff for processing materials and making them available.

In a later chapter Clark goes on to name the following as services to be provided by a Curriculum Center: maintaining the collection in good order for retrieval; maintaining a catalog or other aids for retrieving materials in the collection; assisting students in identifying materials useful to them in preparing units, lesson plans, and other teaching programs; assisting patrons in identifying materials to teach selection and evaluation; teaching students the broad nature of materials in the collection which can be useful to them; delivering and otherwise encouraging use of the media in classes and other group meetings; advising students about manuals and how-to-do-it books useful in their course work for materials production or learning center construction; giving students instruction and practice in operating equipment; implementing policies in a fair and efficient manner; keeping good records on orders, acquisitons, supplies, and

circulating items; maintaining facilities and equipment that contribute to the primary functions of the center; giving class tours and group tours; giving class lectures; compiling bibliographies and guides to the media; circulating materials; collecting reviews and evaluations; conducting research to improve services; coordinating services with other campus and community agencies which offer similar functions or supplementary functions; cooperating with other curriculum materials centers and curriculum collections.(6)

The following statistics pertain to the question of how broadly each institution defined their educational communities and what type of support and services were offered to the constituencies. Nine of the fourteen libraries surveyed had an education reference desk--seven were situated in the curriculum center, two were adjacent to the center. Twelve of the centers surveyed had librarians as directors with seven also having a teaching background.

Eleven of the centers had education faculty liasons to the curriculum library. The following methods of communication were used between librarians and faculty liasons: advising on acquisitions, weeding, etc.; newsletters, memos; attending meetings, serving on committees; conducting workshops; providing bibliographies, offering assistance with research; and nagging.

Thirteen librarians handled bibliographic instruction, ten conducted tours, eleven provided lectures to students in

education methods classes. On the other hand, only two directors lectured other college courses, only one held programs for community schhols and only one organized seminars and workshops for the education community.

The librarians were definitely committed to serving the students and faculty in education and were much less involved with serving the larger university or outside community.

Ahlsted's survey showed the average curriculum center staff to consist of 12% professional; 22% support staff; and 66 % students. Our libraries varied so in the ratio of professionals to support staff to student workers that we would be hard pressed to describe the "average" center. However, all but two had at least 1/2 professional positions and all but three had at least 3/4 support staff positions and ten of the fourteen had some student aide hours.

In summary, we were able to conclude that the institutions we surveyed were providing a wide range of services to education faculty and staff. Institutions were moving towards making all curriculum materials available through the library's main catalog and circulation system and using national standards for cataloging materials. Thus the items would be easier to find and available to the greatest number of people.

In the future, we might follow up our survey with a slant towards the effective domain. That is, how do the curriculum center staff perceive their administrative

support in relation to staffing, budgets, and expectations of output? How do faculty and staff view the services of the curriculum center? In the area of budgeting, how does the education budget compare with other bibliographic areas? Is there a formula for distribution and is it based on circulation statistics, number of enrolled students in a particular field, or a combination?

We would like to find out what the areas which need to be addressed by administrators and librarians are. Some issues which we forsee are: lack of funds, textbook companies no longer giving out complimentary copies, and students needing more professional reference help in the field of education.

CURRICULUM MATERIALS CENTERS IN ILLINOIS
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